

Press Release

September 20, 2005

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT READIES FOR HURRICANE RITA

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in conjunction with other federal agencies, continues to prepare for Hurricane Rita.

Rita has the potential to track through the Gulf region with a current impact zone on the Texas Gulf Coast. Residents in Southeastern Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama should be advised that the storm could influence areas already damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

"I strongly, strongly urge Gulf Coast residents to pay attention to this storm," said R. David Paulison, acting FEMA director. "Listen to your state and local officials. If they ask you to evacuate, please do so immediately."

FEMA and federal agencies are preparing for Rita by pre-positioning supplies and commodities in the surrounding affected areas and potential landfall areas of the storm. The following preliminary actions have been taken:

- FEMA is pre-positioning water and ice to forward staging areas:
 - 50 truckloads of water and ice and 20 truckloads of MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) are at federal facilities in Florida.
 - Two Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, consisting of approximately 70 people, are in Florida.
 - Two Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces, consisting of approximately 68 people are in Florida.
 - 45 truckloads of water, 45 truckloads of ice, and eight truckloads of MREs are being staged in Texas.
 - Nine Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces, consisting of approximately 506 people, are pre-staging in Texas.

- Nine Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, consisting of approximately 385 people, are pre-staging in Texas.
- The U.S. Coast Guard is ready with helicopters from Air Station Houston and Air Station Corpus Christi.
- Coast Guard units on immediate standby in Miami include:
 - Damage Assessment Teams
 - Emergency Response and Reconstruction Teams
 - Personnel at Station Fort Pierce
- Coast Guard Air Station Miami has helicopters ready to respond in Miami.
- More than 300,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen are currently available throughout the 54 states and territories prepared to respond to any crisis. The National Guard is pre-positioning resources in preparation for the anticipated landfall of Hurricane Rita.
- The USS Bataan will resupply at Mayport, Fla., embark six additional helicopters and follow behind Hurricane Rita to support potential relief efforts.
- The USS Tortuga, USNS Comfort, USS Iwo Jima, USS Shreveport and the USS Grapple will reposition to the east to avoid the storm.
- The USNS Patuxent will remain in the area to support repositioning ships.
- Mobilization centers for FEMA at Homestead and Patrick Air Force Bases in Florida are pre-positioning commodities such as ice, food, water and equipment.

For more information on emergency preparedness, please visit www.ready.gov or www.fema.gov.

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